

## **KERBSIDE RECYCLING SCHEME UPDATE / RECYCLING ISSUES**

### **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the progress of the Council's Kerbside Recycling Scheme that has been implemented in various parts of the District. It highlights various issues that have arisen during the scheme and also issues to be considered for future recycling projects / expansion.

### **2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 The kerbside recycling scheme was initially introduced on a trial basis in 1999 to 1500 households in the Hawkwell / Ashingdon area of the District.
- 2.2 At the meeting of the Full Council on 20 February 2001 the decision was taken to expand this scheme to cover 5000 households. This involved making the trial area permanent and adding a further 3500 households onto the scheme.
- 2.3 At the meeting of Full Council on 24 April 2001 (Min.131/01) it was agreed to add a further approximately 450 properties in the Little Wheatleys area of Rayleigh to the scheme. This was due mainly to compensate for the removal of the Bring Bank facility at the nearby St. John Fisher Recreation Ground. The total number of participating households is therefore now approximately 5700.
- 2.4 Those households on the scheme receive an alternating fortnightly collection of residual waste (grey bin) and organic waste (green bin) in addition to a weekly collection of dry recyclables (blue box). The green bin and blue box were supplied free of charge to each of the households.

### **3 UPDATE ON THE SCHEME**

- 3.1 The additional households included in the expansion commenced their participation in the kerbside scheme in September 2001. This followed a period of promotion and education that included providing all households with a leaflet and collection timetable, public meetings in each of the new recycling round areas and use of the mobile exhibition unit at weekends in relevant areas.

- 3.2 The Government has set all Districts standards for the percentage of all household waste that is recycled. This Council's standards are 10% by the end of 2003/2004 and 18% by the end of 2005/2006.
- 3.3 In 1999/2000 the Council's recycling figure was 4.5% and in 2000/1 it had risen to 5.4%. The expansion of the kerbside scheme however has had a noticeable effect on the recycling performance, as the figure for 2001/02 was 8%.
- 3.4 As the expansion did not take place until late September 2001, approximately 4200 of the currently participating households were only on the scheme for 6 months of last year. Therefore without any expansion of the kerbside scheme the figure for 2002/3 can be expected to increase again and be very close to or possibly even reach the 10% Government standard figure for 2003/2004.
- 3.5 The expansion of the kerbside scheme has generally been well received and accepted by most households, with the majority participating actively, hence the increase in the percentage recycling rate.
- 3.6 There are nonetheless some residents that do not like the scheme or have had particular issues. Some of the most common complaints / comments have been:
- a) They do not like the fortnightly collection of their grey bin.
  - b) The blue box for dry recyclables is not big enough (although extra bags can be placed by the side of the box).
  - c) The lid blows off the blue box.
  - d) The green bin has not been fully emptied as contents have become compacted.
  - e) The blue box is too heavy to carry out (these were mostly at the start of the expansion from the more elderly residents and has been resolved by putting them on an assisted collection).

#### **4. FUTURE RECYCLING ISSUES**

- 4.1 One of the main issues is the ability to meet the Government Standards that have been set for the percentage of waste recycled and in particular the associated cost that is required to implement kerbside schemes. Whilst it is probable that the Council will hit its 2003/2004 Government standard of 10% with the current number of households on the kerbside scheme, the 2005/2006 standard of 18% is unlikely to be reached without further expansion.

- 4.2 From analysing the amount of waste recycled from the current number of households, it is estimated that approximately another 7500 households would be needed on the kerbside scheme to reach the 18% Standard.
- 4.3 With the present collection system, this would incur a revenue cost in the region of £150/160,000 per annum for the extra collection and a capital cost of approximately £97,500 for the purchase of the green bins and the blue boxes.
- 4.4 If these extra households were to be added to the scheme then it would need to be implemented by the end of 2004 at the latest, to enable those additional residents to adjust to the alternative collection regime and be participating for a full year.
- 4.5 Whilst this report does not require solutions or decisions on this issue or in fact make definite proposals for recommendation, there could be possible alternatives that may not involve the same level of cost as detailed in section 4.3. If Members wished these alternatives could be given further consideration, including discussing the practicalities with our Refuse / Recycling Contractor.
- 4.6 One possible way of expanding the kerbside scheme at a much lower cost could be to change the weekly dry recyclable collection (blue box) to a fortnightly collection.
- 4.7 This would mean that another week's collection round (approximately 6000 properties) could be added with little extra cost as the refuse vehicle and crew would alternate between 2 collection rounds on a fortnightly basis, thus meaning that the Contractor in effect would not have to be scheduling extra rounds (and staff and vehicles)
- 4.8 Another way of reducing the financial burden of recycling could be to replace the blue box with the issue of recycling bags for the dry recyclables. This would be a faster collection process for the Contractor and enable them to collect from a larger number of households on each day's round.
- 4.9 The issue of bags would also overcome some of the complaints / issues experienced with the current scheme, as highlighted in section 3.6 of this report.

- 4.10 Possible disadvantages of this system could be that residents may not like the dry recyclables collection becoming fortnightly as well as their normal grey bin collection and therefore a “perceived” reduction in service.
- 4.11 Another negative factor may be that residents would not like the idea of switching to bags for part of their refuse storage after being used to a bin or box even though the dry recyclables should not create the same odour as the residual waste kept in the grey bin.
- 4.12 The options detailed above are at present merely suggestions and if Members feel that they are a possible option for the future, could be investigated in further detail as to their suitability.

## **5. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The effective expansion of the recycling scheme will assist the Council in meeting the statutory standards set by Government. Recycling is of national and local importance and is part of the Council's Agenda 21 Strategy.

## **6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The cost of operating the current kerbside recycling scheme is met within existing budgets. In order to expand the scheme to other households in the District, it is probable that significant extra funding will need to be identified, dependent on the collection methods employed.

## **7 RECOMMENDATION**

It is proposed that this Committee **recommends**

- (i) That Members note the progress made in the Council's level of recycling following last year's expansion of the kerbside scheme.
- (ii) That Members note the likely cost implications of future expansion and decide if they wish further investigations to take place on the alternative options detailed in section 4 of this report at this time.

Roger Crofts

Corporate Director (Finance & External Services)

---

**Background Papers:**

For further information please contact Jeremy Bourne on:-

Tel:- 01702 318163  
E-Mail:- [jeremy.bourne@rochford.gov.uk](mailto:jeremy.bourne@rochford.gov.uk)